Chavkin, Nancy Feyl, Recommendations for Research on the Effectiveness of School, Family, and Community Partnerships. *School Community Journal, Vol. 8, No 1,* Spring/Summer 1998.

**Summary and Reflection**:

The purpose of this article was to summarize what we have learned over the years about school, family, and community partnerships and to explore what we still need to learn. The partnership can be defined as “the state or condition of being a partner; participation; association; joint interest” according to the Random Dictionary of the English Language. For people the word conjures up a continuum of thoughts about the relationship between schools, families, and communities. For the purpose of this article we will use the definition when schools, families, and communities work together with a formal plan to develop initiatives that will improve education.

When searching for the research on family, school and community partnerships the author has found that very little has been done in actual evaluation of successful partnerships. Most of the articles describe current partnerships and may give a case study or vignette of current relationships but very little contained the research and evaluation necessary to advocate replication on a scale level. Of the 127 articles that were found on school, family and community partnerships 72.8% of the articles were opinion and summaries of current partnerships. Another 24.8% were descriptions of successful partnerships and only 2.4% were actual research-based articles.

Based on the research there are some suggestions for forming positive impactful partnerships. The first suggestion was to learn how to work with many different groups that are involved with the partnership. Many times there are political issues to investigate, as all three entities are very public. The second issue is about vocabulary. The word partnership can mean different things to the different stakeholders. Sometimes it is linked to coordination, sometimes, collaboration, sometimes joint or shared services. In order to ensure determined outcomes it is important to clarify vocabulary. The third issue is about clarifying that outcome. Is the outcome improved academic achievement, social well-being, an improved school climate or a stronger partnership? The next issue is about attribution. Is it the partnership that is causing the change or other variables? The last issue is the partnership between the participants and service providers.

Researchers must do some things to ensure reliable research. The must define their terms precisely. All stakeholders must be extremely aware and competent of understanding the intent of the partnership. The partnership must be clear about the outcomes of the relationship and only those outcomes must be measured. It is important that all stakeholders understand the relationship between the theory of the school-family-community partnership and the partnership activities. The article, also, addressed the importance of involving participants in the partnership research and isolating the specific parts of the partnership that will be addressed.

In summary, the article addresses the issue that we do not have strong research-base supporting school-family-community partnerships. If partnerships are going to be a viable option, we are going to have to develop new research strategies to do it because partnerships are complex and cause problems for traditional research methodology.

I choose this article because I am interested in the research behind a lot of educational practices today and how we determine effectiveness. Seems like there are a lot of practices today implemented that do not produce the intended results for many of our students today.